

Do you know someone who may be considering suicide?

STAR HEALTH DESK

Close to 800 000 people die due to suicide every year, which is one person every 40 seconds. Many more attempt suicide. Suicide occurs throughout the lifespan and is the second leading cause of death among 15-29 year olds globally.

Suicide is a global phenomenon; in fact, 79% of suicides occurred in low- and middle-income countries in 2016.

Suicide accounted for 1.4% of all deaths worldwide, making it the 18th leading cause of death in 2016. There are indications that for each adult who died of suicide there may have been more than 20 others attempting suicide.

What you should know if you are worried about someone

- Suicides are preventable.
- It is okay to talk about suicide.
- Asking about suicide does not provoke the act of suicide. It often reduces anxiety and helps people feel understood.
- Warning signs that someone may be seriously thinking about suicide
- Threatening to kill oneself.
- Saying things like "No-one



will miss me when I am gone."

- Looking for ways to kill oneself, such as seeking access to pesticides, firearms or medication, or browsing the internet for means of taking one's own life.
- Saying goodbye to close family members and friends, giving away of valued possessions, or writing a will.

Who is at risk of suicide?

- People who have previously tried to take their own life.
- Someone with depression or an alcohol or drug problem.
- Those who are suffering from severe emotional distress, for example following the loss of a loved one or a relationship break-up.
- People suffering from chronic pain or illness.
- People who have experienced war, violence, trauma, abuse or discrimination.
- Those who are socially isolated.

What you can do

- Find an appropriate time and a quiet place to talk about suicide with the person you are worried about. Let them know that you are there to listen.
 - Encourage the person to seek help from a professional, such as a doctor, mental health professional, counsellor or social worker. Offer to accompany them to an appointment.
 - If you think the person is in immediate danger, do not leave him or her alone. Seek professional help from the emergency services, a crisis line, or a health-care professional, or turn to family members.
 - If the person you are worried about lives with you, ensure that he or she does not have access to means of self-harm (for example pesticides, firearms or medication) in the home.
 - Stay in touch to check how the person is doing.
- Remember, if you know someone who may be considering suicide, talk to them about it. Listen with an open mind and offer your support.

Source: World Health Organisation

NEW TREATMENT

A promising new way to treat appendicitis

A brand new study from Finland shows the choice of antibiotic a fair alternative for most patients with appendicitis. Five years after treatment with antibiotics, almost two-thirds of patients had not had another attack.

It is a substantial change in contemplating how to treat an inflamed appendix. For decades, appendicitis has been considered a medical emergency requiring immediate surgery to remove the appendix as a result of fears it may burst, which can be life-threatening.

But advances in imaging tests, mainly CT scans, have caused it to be easier to find out if an appendix might burst, or if patients might be safely treated without surgery. The results suggest that nearly two-thirds of appendicitis patients do not face that risk and may be good candidates for antibiotics instead.

Research has additionally shown antibiotics may benefit some children with appendicitis. The Finnish results were published in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

"It's a feasible, viable and a secure option," said Dr Paulina Salminen, the study's lead author and a surgeon at Turku University Hospital in Finland. Appendix removal is the most typical emergency surgery worldwide, with about 300,000 performed annually in the United States alone, said Salminen. She said the results from her study suggest many of those surgeries might be avoided.

Dr Giana Davidson, a University of Washington surgeon, is associated with a similarly designed multicentre U.S. study that may answer whether similar benefits could be seen for antibiotics versus surgery. Davidson called the Finnish study "a critical piece to the puzzle but I do not think it answers all of the questions."

HEALTH bulletin



New gene variants associated with chronic back pain

Chronic back pain is the number one cause of years lived with disability worldwide. In a new study, Pradeep Suri of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Seattle, Washington, and colleagues in the United States and Europe, in association with Dr Frances Williams from King's College London's Department of Twin Research and Genetic Epidemiology, identified three novel genetic variants associated with chronic back pain.

The study, which was published in the open-access journal PLOS Genetics, links the risk for back pain with variants in genes controlling skeletal development, among other pathways.

"The results of our genome-wide association study point to multiple pathways that may influence risk for chronic back pain," said Suri. "Chronic back pain is linked to changes in mood, and the role of the central nervous system in the transition from acute to chronic back pain is well-recognised. However, the top two genetic variants we identified suggest causes implicating the peripheral structures, such as the spine."

2 in 3 people with type 2 diabetes have cardiovascular disease risk factors

STAR HEALTH REPORT

The International Diabetes Federation (IDF) in partnership with Novo Nordisk has announced the results from the 'Taking Diabetes to Heart' survey recently. The global survey investigated cardiovascular disease (CVD) awareness among 12,695 people with type 2 diabetes and revealed that 2 in 3 had CVD risk factors such as high blood pressure, uncontrolled blood glucose levels and high cholesterol and/or had experienced a CVD event such as angina, heart attack, stroke or heart failure.

However, 1 in 4 respondents had never discussed, or cannot remember discussing, CVD risk factors with a doctor and only 1 in 4 considered themselves to be at low risk of CVD.

Diabetes currently affects 425 million adults worldwide, with most cases being type 2 diabetes. CVD, which includes stroke, coronary heart disease and peripheral artery disease, is the leading cause of disability and death in people with type 2 diabetes.

In the 'Taking Diabetes to Heart' survey, 3 in 4 people with type 2 diabetes said they relied on information about CVD from their doctor. More than half of respondents said they needed more information

about the risk factors associated with the development of CVD to better understand the risks in order to help prevent them.

"Cardiovascular disease can have a devastating impact on the lives of people with type 2 diabetes and their families," said Professor Stephen Gough, global chief medical officer of Novo Nordisk. "The IDF survey findings are striking and reinforce the importance of raising awareness of CVD risk and its impact on people living with type 2

diabetes. We are committed to continue working with IDF while utilising these global findings to inform future efforts that can help improve health outcomes."

"Taking Diabetes to Heart' will culminate in a comprehensive report with regional and country-specific results and resources to help support knowledge and awareness of CVD among people with type 2 diabetes and those at risk around the world.



PHOTO: COURTESY

Apollo Hospitals Dhaka celebrates World Heart Day

The Paediatric Cardiology Department of Apollo Hospitals Dhaka is celebrating the 'World Heart Day 2018' by offering treatment for underprivileged children with congenital heart diseases like Patent Ductus Arteriosus (PDA), Atrial Septal Defect (ASD) and Ventricular Septal Defect (VSD). The treatment is being done using state of the art modern technology without any surgical procedure.

Asgar Ali Hospital observed World Heart Day

Asgar Ali Hospital commemorated 'World Heart Day 2018' focusing on the theme "My Heart, Your Heart". The day was celebrated with a rally. Later, the Consultants of the Cardiology Department attended an awareness programme and talked on how to lead a heart-healthy life by following a healthy lifestyle.



World Mental Health Day 2018

10 October



Mental Health is just as Important as Physical Health



In Search of Excellence